

Use of County Property

Normally, crafts persons (mechanics, carpenters, etc.) provide certain tools of the trade as a job requirement. However, when deemed appropriate, the County provides employees with equipment, tools, and vehicles to carry out the job assigned to them. If assigned such equipment, it becomes your responsibility to exercise reasonable care in its use to preserve the life of the equipment and to observe all safety precautions. Personal use of vehicles, materials, supplies, tools or other equipment is not permitted. Violation could result in counseling, termination, prosecution, or all three.

Use of County Vehicles

Twenty-four hour vehicle assignments are based on the following criteria:

1. The employee is on-call for emergencies where failure to respond in an expedient manner will result in a life-threatening situation, serious property damage, or significant disruption to major services.
2. When it has been determined by the Deputy County Manager that there is a demonstrated advantage to the County for the employee to have a 24-hour vehicle assignment.

Employees are not permitted to transport any person other than those engaged in official business in a County vehicle.

Operators of vehicles are not permitted to stop at grocery stores, restaurants, or any such business establishments while en route to the job site, at the beginning of their work shift, or upon completion of their work shift. County vehicles may not be used for the sole purpose of running errands to any such establishments before, during or after working hours. Operators are permitted to stop at these establishments, if passing such establishments en route from one job site to another, at the time designated for a break or lunch period. In no case, however, will the operator be allowed to remain at such location longer than his/her 15 minute break period or designated lunch period.

Operators will not take a County vehicle home or to a restaurant for lunch breaks without specific approval of their Department Director, or under circumstances previously explained.

Emergency vehicles are governed by their respective Standard Operating Procedures and strict adherence is required.

Motor Vehicle Eligibility

All employees who operate vehicles for County business MUST maintain a valid operator or CDL driver's license (appropriate for the type of vehicle driven) and meet all other County conditions for driving. All drivers of County vehicles must be 18 years of age or older. Any employee who uses his/her personal vehicle for County business must also comply with the Florida Financial Responsibility Laws. Specifically, the employee must, at a minimum, provide auto liability insurance coverage of at least \$25,000 per person, \$50,000 per accident and \$25,000 property damage while driving a personal vehicle for County business. It shall be the employee's responsibility to immediately notify his/her supervisor if his/her operator's license is suspended, revoked or restricted OR if at any time, he/she does not meet the insurance coverage required for personal use of his/her vehicle for County business. Failure to meet these guidelines may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

County Vehicle Speed Policy

All County vehicles will be driven in accordance with Chapter 316, Florida Statutes. Vehicle operators, with the exception of Fire Service and Emergency Medical Services, will not exceed posted speed limits at any time. Vehicle operators will compensate for weather and other adverse conditions, and adjust speed accordingly. Failure to comply with this directive may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Reporting Vehicle Accidents

When a County vehicle (or personal vehicle being used for County business) is involved in an accident of any type, the operator shall immediately call the police, Risk Management and Placement Program Manager. For Risk Management, the County Communications Center can be reached at 863-534-0360 24/7 and will make the proper notifications.

Electronic Communications

This policy covers the use of County owned telephones, cell phones, telefacsimile (fax) machines, pagers, email, internet service and other like technology. This technology is purchased and intended for County business and not for personal use. However, there are some limited exceptions for personal use as noted in the following sub-categories. Inappropriate use or abuse of County communication systems and devices will subject employees to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Privacy Disclaimer

Because these are County owned technologies intended for business use, employees are hereby notified that the County has the capability, reserves the right to, and will monitor the use of such communications, as needed. Monitoring may include, but is not limited to, identifying and analyzing telephone numbers, time and length of both incoming and outgoing calls, internet sites visited, email text, etc. Please note that emails are generally considered part of the public record. Therefore, employees should beware of abusing or misusing County communication devices and services.

Personal Telephone Calls

Personal telephone calls should be restricted to break periods. Emergency telephone calls shall be immediately directed to the proper work area. Be sure to inform potential callers of your exact telephone number and extension so that an emergency call may be completed as quickly as possible. Personal long distance calls shall not be made from County phones without prior approval of the supervisor, then in emergency situations only. In all instances, all personal long distance charges shall be made to your home telephone or to your personal calling card.

Fax Machines and Copiers

Fax communications are considered to be in the same general category as telephones. However, any personal use of a Fax (or copier) must be pre-approved by your supervisor, and should only be approved for occasional, incidental use. Approved use should also be restricted to break periods; and employees should not incur any long distance charges to the County, nor should employees receive faxes that consume other than minor amounts of fax print paper, nor should they use other than very minor amounts of copier paper for personal use.

Cell Phones

On cell phones for which the County pays a flat rate plan that includes bundled minutes, employees may make personal phone calls. However, employees are responsible for reimbursing the County for all costs related to personal (and business) bundled minute calls that exceed the bundled plan. On cell phones that do not include a flat rate or a bundled minute plan, employees are responsible for reimbursing the County for all costs related to personal calls. SAFETY ALERT: Using a mobile or cell phone while your vehicle is in motion presents an unsafe condition. Whenever feasible, therefore, employees are expected to refrain from using mobile or cell phones while their vehicles are in motion. Whenever an employee must use a cell or mobile phone while operating a moving vehicle (such as in an emergency situation), extra caution should be observed, especially when dialing.

Computers

County owned computers are intended for business use. However, occasional, incidental personal use during break periods is allowed with pre-approval by your supervisor. Unauthorized use of another employee's computer and/or unauthorized access to such employee's computer files is strictly forbidden and will subject the offender to a strong disciplinary action, up to and including termination. This does not preclude the right of an employee's supervisor (or specific designee) from accessing an employee's computer and/or files for legitimate business reasons.

Email

As with use of fax machines, any personal use of email must be occasional, incidental and pre-approved by your supervisor, and done during break periods. However, accessing personal pop-mail or web-based email is strictly forbidden. Additionally, personal email messages sent or received are to be brief, non-offensive in language or content, and may contain no attachments. VIRUS WARNING: Because viruses are common to email, users should be careful in opening communications (especially attachments) from sources they do not know. If you suspect you have received an email containing a virus, do NOT open it. Immediately contact the Management Information Services Help Desk for assistance, and notify your supervisor. Again, please note that emails are generally considered to be a part of the public record.

Internet

Again, internet service is intended for business purposes. However, occasional, incidental personal use is allowed during break periods, but only with pre-approval by and with full knowledge of your supervisor. All usage of the internet must meet professional, ethical and non-offensive standards. For instance, accessing or attempting to access pornographic sites is strictly forbidden and will result in termination of employment. Further personal use restrictions/prohibitions include, but are not limited to, downloading files, downloading programs, accessing personal pop-mail or web-based email, participating in electronic discussion groups, and posting information to the web. Also, users are forbidden to transmit any data over the internet that is classified as sensitive, reserved, or otherwise restricted by Florida Statutes or any applicable Federal law. Management Information Services has implemented software that filters access to the internet. Inappropriate and non-business related sites identified by the filtering process will be blocked. Attempts by the end user to circumvent or "test" the filtering process are forbidden. Staff who require access to a blocked site to perform their duties should contact the Management Information Services Help Desk. Upon verification that the blocked site is a valid site to be used for business purposes, Management Information Services will enable access to that site. The Management Information Services Director must approve any other methods of connection to the internet, in advance. VIRUSES: Management Information Services will work with users to ensure that an appropriate virus protection plan is in place to prevent infection, and to provide assistance in retrieving information needed for Polk County business purposes. If you

suspect you have downloaded a virus, immediately contact Management Information Services Help Desk for assistance, and notify your supervisor.

Lost or Stolen Equipment

It is the responsibility of employees to safeguard all County issued equipment, including cell phones, radios, pagers, lap-top computers, etc. Employees found at fault for lost, stolen or damaged equipment may be responsible for reimbursement to the County. Please note that employees will not be charged for stolen air time (cell phones) if the theft is immediately reported to Management Information Services at (863)534-7551.